

establishment of a Ground Water Authority by the States/UTs which will regulate the overutilization of groundwater resources in the concerned States/UTs.

Searching of Saraswati river by ONGC

†2256. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC has taken the responsibility for searching the Saraswati river and its pure water resources, lost deep into the ground thousands of years ago in water crisis-ridden western Rajasthan area;

(b) if so, the detailed information of the same with Government, so far;

(c) whether Government want to take the help of ONGC for searching the water resources of various rivers of the country which become extinct in the past; and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. ONGC has undertaken a project titled "ONGC Project Sarawati" it is an initiative to contribute to the welfare of the people in drought prone areas of Western Rajasthan by providing safe drinking water. based on satellite imagery by ONGC, it was found that a few thousand years ago the river flowed from North-eastern side to South-western direction before disappearing into the desert. The Project is focused on identification of deeper aquifers, otherwise not tapped by agencies such as State groundwater departments and Central ground water bodies. It is planned to drill deep tubewells down to 1000 metres below ground level at several places in Jaisalmer, Barmer and Bikaner districts. The operational activities in the project have been entrusted by ONGC to WAPCOS.

(c) and (d) So far there is no proposal in MOWR/Central Ground Water Board to take the help of ONGC for searching the water resources of various rivers of the country which became extinct in the past.